

Costa: "Our Valley is set to receive more water than in recent years. This is good news for Valley jobs and our economy."

FRESNO – Congressman Jim Costa today announced that the Interior Department is forecasting a federal water supply allocation for south of the Delta agricultural contractors that is four times greater than last year's initial allocation. In its 2011 Federal Water Allocation Outlook, the Interior Department forecasts a water allocation of 45%. Last year's initial water allocation was a mere 5%.

Costa called the forecast a good starting point and an important step forward for the Valley's economy.

"Our Valley is set to receive more water than in recent years. This is good news for Valley jobs and our economy," said Costa. "An increased forecast will allow our farmers to start planning for the coming growing season. Advanced planning will have a ripple effect throughout our economy, from growers to local businesses."

Water forecasts and initial allocations often improve as the water year develops. For instance, Costa along with other Valley lawmakers and leaders were able to press the Administration to bump last year's initial allocation of 5% to over 40% by the end of the water year.

"Given early snowpack levels and runoff, I view this forecast as a starting point we can increase overtime," added Costa "We pressed the Administration to increase the water flowing to the Valley in 2010 and we can do it again this year."

Costa also recognized the Interior Department for today's announcement:

“Our work with Senator Feinstein and Congressman Cardoza to push the Administration has made a difference. They have shown a willingness to provide more administrative flexibility and attention to Valley water. I appreciate the efforts of the Interior Department on this critical issue and I look forward to working with everyone involved in California water to increase our supply.”

Today’s water supply forecast will be followed by an official water allocation announcement of Water Year 2011 for the Central Valley Project. This initial water allocation announcement is planned for mid-February, as required by contract terms. Water supply updates will then be made monthly or more often as appropriate and will be posted on Reclamation’s website at <http://www.usbr.gov/mp/pa/water>